

EGG 2022 – Topics in ellipsis

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5 Ellipsis identity

- ❖ When confronted with an elliptic utterance, a hearer attempts to recover its identity from information in the proximate discourse.
- ❖ Efforts to provide an accurate description of what information can(not) be used to recover the identity of an elliptic utterance are commonly characterized as efforts to state *the identity conditions on ellipsis licensing*.
- ❖ A popular method for determining the identity conditions is to see to which formal / structural aspects of the antecedent clause the hearer is sensitive when attempting to recover the identity of the elliptic phrase.

Method: [1] develop / find cases where the elliptic clause and its antecedent mismatch for some formal property F
 [2] is ellipsis still judged as acceptable?

If yes, then F isn't relevant to the identity condition, as having mismatching F s doesn't negatively impact on ellipsis recoverability

If no, the F is relevant to the identity condition, as having mismatching F s does negatively impact on ellipsis recoverability

- ❖ Applying this methodology helps us to determine to what extent the identity conditions on ellipsis licensing must make reference to syntactic structure (if at all).
- ❖ *A quick aside about nonisomorphic elliptic phrases:*
 - We saw in §4.1.1 (of Part 1) that some sententialist analyses appeal to the existence of syntactically nonisomorphic elliptic phrases to explain why some clausal configurations unexpectedly show island-insensitivity.
 - Because there are alternative analyses available for the cases presented in §4.1.1, such data don't prove the existence of nonisomorphic elliptic phrases.
 - In the following few subsections, we'll see elliptic utterances in which in the only sensible interpretation requires a nonisomorphic source. These utterances therefore provide proof that nonisomorphic elliptic phrases exist (*assuming a sententialist analysis, of course*).

5.1 Tolerable structural mismatches

5.1.1 Mismatch in the form of (co-)referential expressions

- ❖ R-expressions in the antecedent can – and often *must* – be replaced by a co-referential pronoun in the elliptic phrase (examples from Merchant 2001: 24, 206 and Abels 2022; cf. Fiengo & May 1994):

- (1) They arrested Alex_i, though he_i didn't know...
 - a. why they arrested him_i. *nonisomorphic*
 - b. * why they arrested Alex_i. *isomorphic*
- (2) [Which suspect]_i did Abby call, and when did she call { him_i / * [which suspect]_i }?
- (3) Fatima arrested John_j, but, because it was dark, he_j thinks Sâna did arrest {him_j / * John_j}.

5.1.2 Size mismatches and paraphrases

- ❖ Elliptic phrases can correspond to a paraphrase (with all or a subset of the same lexemes) of their antecedent:

- (4) [Context: a country when one can only vote for one candidate in a general election.]
 A: Sally voted for a candidate who speaks French yesterday.
 B: And {he / she / the candidate Sally voted for} speaks German. *nonisomorphic*
 B': # And she voted for a candidate who speaks German. *isomorphic*

- ❖ The antecedent of an elliptic phrase can be syntactically smaller than the elliptic phrase. In clausal ellipsis cases, the elliptic phrase is interpreted as a copular clause:

- (5) A: Sally has [_{ANT} a new boyfriend]. (Barros & Vicente 2016:60)
 B: Whô is {it / he / Sally's new boyfriend}? *nonisomorphic*
 B': # Whô does she have? *isomorphic*

- (6) *From Anand, Hardt & McCloskey 2022:4*
 a. With [_{ANT} the campaign on hold] – and who knows for how long the campaign will be on hold – ...
 b. The doctors anticipate [_{ANT} a full recovery] for me, but they really don't know when that recovery will be.
 c. The Forest Service eventually agreed to the proposal, and Wood came up with [_{ANT} a site] that seemed acceptable to the tribes. He won't reveal exactly where that site is, except to say that the location is easy to protect from pot hunters.

- ❖ In the VP ellipsis case, suitable nominal antecedents are built from verbs:

- (7) *From Hardt 1993:116-118*
 a. [Many Chicago-area cab drivers]_i ...sense a drop in [_{ANT} visit]-ors to the city. Those who do visit, they_i say, are not taking cabs. (Chicago Tribune, 2/6/92)
 b. We should suggest to her that she officially appoint us as a committee and invite faculty_i [_{ANT} particip]-ation. They_i won't participate, of course... (University of Pennsylvania e-mail message)

5.1.3 Mismatches in illocutionary force

- ❖ Mismatches in illocutionary force are permitted in clausal ellipsis:

- (8) A: Always save a little from each paycheck. (Rudin 2019: 267)
 B: Why should {I/one} always save a little from each paycheck? *nonisomorphic*
 B': * Why always save a little from each paycheck? *isomorphic*

5.1.4 Modality mismatches

- ❖ Mismatches in modality are permitted in clausal ellipsis:

- (9) a. *Appearance of modality* (Rudin 2019: 266; cf. Klein 1985, Merchant 2001)
 Sally knows that there is always the potential for awful things to happen, but she doesn't know when awful things {will / might} happen.
 b. *Disappearance of modality*

Although Sally sees that she **must** defeat her competitors, she relies on Susie to tell her h \ddot{o} w **to** defeat her competitors.

c. *Abstraction of modality*

Sally said that customers should be given lower rates, but Susie said it's hard to see h \ddot{o} w **cus-**tomers **could** be given lower rates.

5.1.5 Tense mismatches

❖ Tense mismatches are permitted in clausal ellipsis, see (10) and (11).

(10) *Antecedent contains T_{PRES} elliptic clause contains T_{ϕ}*

A: Sally will build a barn.

(Merchant 2001)

B: Does she know h \ddot{o} w **to** build a barn?

nonisomorphic

B': # Does she know h \ddot{o} w **she will** build a barn?

Isomorphic

(11) *Antecedent contains T_{ϕ} elliptic clause contains T_{PRES}*

(Rudin 2019)

The baseball player went public with his desire **to be** traded. Apparently, he doesn't care wh \ddot{e} re **he** {is / will be} traded.

5.2 Intolerable structural mismatches

NB: the following mismatches are intolerable only under ellipsis! The nonelliptic version of each case is judged as acceptable!

5.2.1 Fixed argument structure effects (no change in valency)

❖ Neither predicate nor clausal ellipsis can be licensed if the argument structure of the elliptic phrase differs from the argument structure of its antecedent, even if the elliptic phrase and its antecedent clause are *co-intensional* (i.e., they have the same propositional meaning, or more accurately, they pick out the same set of possible worlds) *modulo* focus-marking, and the valency remains constant.

(12) *Fixed argument structure effects in VP ellipsis*

(cf. Merchant 2005)

a. A: Straw was loaded onto the van.

B: * The l \ddot{o} rry was **loaded with straw**, too.

B': * No, the van **w \ddot{a} sn't loaded with straw**.

b. A: The jacket was embroidered with peace signs.

B: * Smiley f \ddot{a} ces were **embroidered onto the jacket**, too.

B': * No, peace signs **w \ddot{e} ren't embroidered onto the jacket**.

c. A: John was presented with flowers.

B: * No, ch \ddot{o} colates were **presented to him**.

B': * No, flowers **w \ddot{e} ren't presented to him**.

d. A: A gift was given to Mary.

B: * S \ddot{u} e was **given a gift**, too.

B': * No, she **w \ddot{a} sn't given a gift**.

(13) *Fixed argument structure effects with clausal ellipsis*

a. A: De muis heeft ergens van gegeten.
The mouse has something of eaten.
'The mouse ate at something.'

- B: * Wât heeft de muis gegeten?
What has the mouse eaten
'What (did the mouse eat)?' (Dutch – Den Dikken 2020:23)
- b. A: Het ijsje smolt ergens van.
The ice-cream melted something from
'The ice cream melted from something.'
- B: * Wât smolt het ijsje?
What melted the ice-cream
'I can't imagine what (melted the ice cream).'

❖ It's actually incorrect to say that fixed argument structure apply **uniformly** across clausal and predicate ellipsis types. For instance, recent research by Lui & Kim (2022) has shown that, in gapping, mismatching for the locative alternation is disallowed, but mismatching is permitted for the dative alternation:

(14) *Mismatches for the locative alternation under gapping*

- a. * William loaded the cargo onto the boat, and Lâuren loaded the truck with the sack.
b. * William loaded the boat with the cargo, and Lâuren loaded the sack onto the truck.

(15) *Mismatches for the dative alternation under gapping*

- a. Austin promised a banquet to the team, and Sÿdney promised the crêw a bônus.
b. Austin promised the team a banquet, and Sÿdney promised a bônus to the crêw.

5.2.2 *Fixed argument effects (change in valency) [partly tolerated in predicate ellipsis]*

❖ Fixed argument structure effects are observed for both clausal and predicate ellipsis for the causative-inchoative alternation:

- (16) a. A: Someone broke the vase. B: * The window did break, too. *VP ellipsis*
b. A: The vase broke. B: * Whô broke the vase? *sluicing*
B': * Yeah, Lûcy broke the vase. *fragment*

❖ Although clausal ellipsis is always prohibited when an elliptic clause and its antecedent mismatch for active/passive voice (for English, at least),¹ such mismatches are (partly) tolerated in predicate ellipsis:

- (17) A: Someone ate the cake. B: * By whôm was the cake ate eaten? *sluicing*
B': * The cake was eaten by Lûcy. *fragments*

(18) *VP ellipsis*

- a. Sally ate cake. B: * Chôcolate was eaten by Sally, too.
b. The book was read by Sally. B: * Lûcy did read the book, too.
c. The system can be used by anyone who wânts to use it. (Merchant 2005)
d. The janitor must remove the trash whenever it is apparent that it shôuld be removed.

(19) *Pseudogapping*

- a. * Roses were bought by some, and ôthers did bring lilies.
b. * Some bought roses and lilies were brought by ôthers. (Merchant 2008)
c. ? Actually, I have implemented it with a manager, but it shôuld have been implemented by a computer technician. (Tanaka 2011: 476)

¹ For more exotic voice alternations, see Murphy 2020, Ranero 2021, Drummond 2021.

- d. The arms were hidden by the rebels as a wôman would her most precious jêwels.
(Merchant 2008, fn.4, originally from Miller 1991)

5.2.3 P-omission with ‘sprouted’ PP fragments

❖ *Sprouting* (Chung et al. 1995) refers to fragments that have no correlate in the antecedent clause:

- (20) A: John finally ate last night. B: Really? **What?** / Yeah, a **banana**.
(21) A: John went swimming. B: Really? **With whom?** / Yeah, **with Mary**.

❖ *P-omission* refers to absence of a preposition in a fragment that could normally host one (22). The canonical sententialist explanation of P-omission is the preposition is P-stranding in the elliptic phrase (23).²

- (22) A: Sandra fixed the car with something. B: (With) what? / Yeah, (with) a wrench.
(23) ... what **did Sandra fix a car with?**

❖ P-omission with ‘sprouted’ fragments is disallowed in clausal ellipsis (cf. Chung 2006, 2013):³

- (24) a. Peter served the meal, but I don’t know to whôm **he served the meal**.
b. * Peter served the meal, but I don’t know whô **he served the meal to**.
(25) a. Mary is jealous, but I don’t know of whôm **she is jealous**.
b. * Mary is jealous but I don’t know whô **she is jealous of**.

❖ Whether P-omission with sprouted phrases is unacceptable in predicate ellipsis contexts is impossible to ascertain, as sprouting in general is banned in predicate ellipsis:

- (26) a. * Pâm will read, but I forget what₁ Sûe will **read t₁**. (Overfelt 2021)
b. * Pâm will read, and the bôôk₁ Sûe will **read t₁**.
c. * Pam will rêad, but she wôn’t **read** the bôôk₁.

5.2.4 “Weir” mismatches

❖ “Weir” mismatches (Weir 2017) involve co-intensional yet structurally distinct elliptic / antecedent clause pairs. In such cases, clausal ellipsis is disallowed:

- (27) a. A: How many fives does ten contain? B: **Ten contains twô fives**.
B’: * **Ten contains five twice**.
b. A: Ten contains five thrice. B: No, **ten contains five twice**.
B’: * No, **ten contains twô fives**.

5.2.5 Nonparallel extraction

❖ A’-extraction across an CP / DP boundary is permitted from VP ellipsis, but only when there is also a parallel instance of A’-extraction in the antecedent clause: (Lasnik & Park 2013)

- (28) a. I know in which tree Âbby thinks that the parrots sleep and also [in which tree]₁ Bên does **think that the parrots sleep t₁**.

² Note that most straightforward way to extend the “P-stranding” analysis of P-omission to non-wh fragments is to assume that they undergo A’-movement. We return to discuss this idea in detail in Part 3.

³ P-stranding under sluicing in sprouting configurations is not always unacceptable. For instance, Nykiel (2012) reports no significant difference in acceptability between the fragments in (iB) and (iB’).

(i) A: I’m a student right now. B: At which university? B’: Which university?

- b. * I know that Abby thinks that the parrots sleep in a rubber tree, and I also know in [what type of tree]₁ Bën does think that the parrots sleep *t*₁.
- (29) a. I know what Abby heard a lecture about, and also what Bën did hear a lecture about.
 b. A: Abby heard a lecture about a Balkan language yesterday.
 B: * And d’you know what kind of language Bën did hear a lecture about?

5.3 Summary of (in)tolerable structural mismatches

	Clausal ellipsis	Predicate ellipsis
Form of coreferential expressions	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns
short / copular clausal paraphrases	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>
Mood mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>
Illocutionary force mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>
Tense mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>
Fixed argument effects	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed
	Voice mismatch disallowed	Voice mismatch (partly) allowed
P-omission with sprouted PPs	disallowed	sprouting is disallowed in general
“Weir” mismatches	disallowed	<i>n / a</i>
Nonparallel extraction	<i>n / a</i>	disallowed

5.4 A well-known semantic licensing condition: Merchant’s (2001) *e-GIVENness* condition

- ❖ One possibility is that the elliptic identity condition is wholly semantic in nature. According to this approach, the identity of an elliptic phrase is recovered by reference to the **meaning** of its antecedent.
- ❖ Merchant’s *e-GIVENness* condition states ellipsis identity over propositions and is therefore a strictly **semantic** identity condition.
- ❖ However, Merchant’s condition does have a syntactic ‘flavour’ to it, which arises via the procedure employed for creating the propositions that are compared. (*as we will see...*)

5.4.1 The theory: *GIVENness* versus *e-GIVENness*

Starting point = Schwarzschild’s (1999) theory of *GIVENness*

- ❖ Ellipsis and deaccenting appear similar: they both involve phonological reduction.⁴ Perhaps the licensing conditions on both forms of reduction are similar?
- (30) a. Someone kissed Pete, but we don’t know whô *kissed Pete*. (deaccenting)
 b. Someone kissed Pete, but we don’t know whô **kissed Pete**. (ellipsis)

- ❖ **Schwarzschild (1999)**: Lack of intonational prominence (deaccenting) indicates *givenness*.

⁴ In fact, Tancredi (1992) claims that ellipsis is nothing more than ‘radical’ deaccenting, i.e., reduction to silence.

- (31) **GIVENness** (first attempt) (Schwarzschild 1999:147)
An utterance U is *given* iff it is entailed by the prior discourse.

❖ **Entailment:** proposition α entails proposition β ($\alpha \Rightarrow \beta$) iff the truth of α requires the truth of β

- (32) The president was assassinated \Rightarrow The president is dead

- (33) A: [α John's adopted a poodle!]
B: Yeah, I already know *that* [β he's adopted a dog].
 $\alpha \Rightarrow \beta$. Therefore, β is *given*.

❖ Somewhat counter-intuitively, *GIVENness* can also (and should) be defined for phrases that contain a focus, provided the focus is substituted for \exists -bound variable of the appropriate type.

- (34) F-closure [F-clo(ψ)] =_{def} the result of replacing F-marked phrases in ψ with variables, and then existentially closing the result.

- (35) A: [α John kissed Mary].
B: No, [β John kissed SUE].

- (36) F-clo(β): **kiss(Sue, John)** $\rightarrow \exists x$ [**kiss(x, John)**] (John kissed someone)

- (37) [α John kissed Mary] \Rightarrow [β John kissed someone]. Therefore β is *given*.

- (38) **GIVENness** (final version) (Schwarzschild 1999:150)
An utterance U counts as given iff it has a salient antecedent A and, modulo \exists -type shifting, A entails the F-closure of U.

❖ **Big question:** can givenness be extended to apply to ellipsis? Answer = **No**.

- (39) A: Sue called Pete a Republican in public.
a. B: Does anyone know why *she insulted him*?
b. B: * Does anyone know why **she insulted him**?

❖ Deaccenting is licensed because the deaccented clause is *given*:

Sue called Pete a Republican in public \Rightarrow Sue insulted Pete

❖ The elliptic clause is therefore given, too. But this isn't enough to license ellipsis!

Merchant's (2001) proposal: a stricter semantic identity relation must hold between an elliptic clause and its antecedent than between a deaccented clause and its antecedent.

❖ *GIVENness* requires one-way entailment: β is *given* iff $\alpha \Rightarrow \beta$.

❖ *e-GIVENness* requires mutual entailment: β is *e-GIVEN* iff $\alpha \Leftrightarrow \beta$.

- (40) **e-GIVENness**

An expression E counts as *e-GIVEN* iff E has a salient antecedent A and, modulo \exists -type shifting,

- i. A entails F-clo(E), and
ii. E entails F-clo(A).

- (41) **Identity condition on ellipsis**

An XP α can be deleted only if α is *e-GIVEN*.

(Merchant 2001:26, 31)

5.4.2 Advantages of the *e-GIVENness* approach #1: mismatches above the argument domain

- ❖ The *e-GIVENness* approach was designed to handle mismatches in: (i) the form of co-referential expressions (“*vehicle change*”), (ii) tense, and (iii) modality.
- ❖ This approach can account for ‘*vehicle change*’ straightforwardly, as e.g., **Alex**_{*i*} and **him**_{*i*} denote the same individual:

(42) [_{α} They arrested Alex_{*i*}], though he_{*i*} didn’t know why [_{β} they arrested him_{*i*}]. (repeated from (1))

α = the event of Sally building a barn in some manner exists after utterance time

β = the event of Sally building a barn in some manner exists

$\alpha \Leftrightarrow \beta$, therefore ellipsis is licensed in β

- ❖ To make the correct predictions about tense and modality mismatches, supplementary pragmatic assumptions are often required.
- ❖ For instance, *e-GIVENness* is satisfied in the tense mismatch case from (10) only if context is temporally constrained by A’s utterance:

(43) Without reference to pragmatic update

a. [_{α} Sally will build a barn] $\approx \exists e \exists X [t(e) > t_0 \wedge \mathbf{build}(e, \mathbf{Sally}, \mathbf{a\ barn}) \wedge X]^5$

b. ... how [_{β} *pro*_{*S*} to build a barn *t*₁] $\approx \exists e \exists X [\mathbf{build}(e, \mathbf{Sally}, \mathbf{a\ barn}) \wedge X]$

α = the event of Sally building a barn in some manner exists after utterance time

β = the event of Sally building a barn in some manner exists

→ α does not mutually entail β , therefore ellipsis is not licensed (contrary to observation)

(44) With reference to pragmatic update

a. [_{α} Sally will build a barn] $\approx \exists e \exists X [t(e) > t_0 \wedge \mathbf{build}(e, \mathbf{Sally}, \mathbf{a\ barn}) \wedge X]$

b. How [_{β} *pro*_{*S*} to build a barn *t*₁] $\approx \exists e \exists X [t(e) > t_0 \wedge \mathbf{build}(e, \mathbf{Sally}, \mathbf{a\ barn}) \wedge X]$

Pragmatic update:

- (i) A’s utterance updates the context set (CS) such that the CS is comprised solely of possible worlds in which “Sally-building-a-barn” events happen after A’s utterance-time.
- (ii) B’s utterance is a felicitous discourse update only if interpreted as temporally restricted in a manner compatible with the CS after A’s update.

- ❖ Furthermore, *e-GIVENness* is satisfied in the modality mismatch case from (9) only if we assess mutual entailment in the ‘*local context*’ (Karttunen 1974) introduced by the *wh*-phrase *when*:

(45) Sally knows that [_{α} there is always the potential for awful things **to** happen], but she doesn’t know when [_{β} awful things {**will** / **might**} happen *t*₁].

Pragmatic update to local context:

Upon encountering *when*, the hearer may shift into a local context, namely the subset of possible worlds that comprise the CS in which awful things **will** happen.

$\alpha_{(\text{local-context})}$ = the event of awful things happening will definitely happen in the future.

$\beta_{(\text{local-context})}$ = the event of awful things happening will definitely happen in the future.

$\alpha \Leftrightarrow \beta$, therefore ellipsis is licensed in β

⁵ Where *X* might be, e.g., “INST(*e*, **carpentry tools**)”.

- ❖ **Summary:** The “*e*-GIVENness + supplementary pragmatic assumptions” approach accounts for the existence of tolerable mismatches above the argument domain.

5.4.3 Advantages of the *e*-GIVENness approach #2: fixed argument structure effects

- ❖ If one assumes that *e*-GIVENness is calculated over VPs in VP ellipsis configurations (following Merchant 2001: §1.4), then the fixed argument effects in (46) are expected, as mutual entailment does not obtain:

(46) *Fixed argument structure effects in VP ellipsis* (repeated from (12))

- a. A: Straw was loaded onto the van.
 B: * The lorry was loaded with straw, too.
 B': * No, the van wasn't loaded with straw.
- b. A: The jacket was embroidered with peace signs.
 B: * Smiley faces were embroidered onto the jacket, too.
 B': * No, peace signs weren't embroidered onto the jacket.
- c. A: John was presented with flowers.
 B: * No, chocolates were presented to him.
 B': * No, flowers weren't presented to him.
- d. A: A gift was given to Mary.
 B: * Sûe was given a gift, too.
 B': * No, she wasn't given a gift.

(47) *Repeated from the a-example in (46)*

- A: Straw₁ was [_α loaded *t*₁ onto the van]. B: * The lorry₁ was [_β loaded with straw *t*₁], too.
 F-clo(α) = $\exists x\exists y[\text{load}(\text{van}, x, y)] \approx \text{someone loaded something onto the van}$
 F-clo(β) = $\exists x\exists y[\text{load}(x, \text{straw}, y)] \approx \text{someone loaded straw onto something}$
 → α and β don't mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

- ❖ If one assumes that *e*-GIVENness is calculated over TPs in clausal ellipsis configurations (following Merchant 2001: §1.4), *e*-GIVENness is satisfied in clausal ellipsis configurations with fixed argument effects, see (49). Therefore, the *e*-GIVENness approach makes the **wrong** predictions here.

(48) *Fixed argument structure effects with clausal ellipsis* (repeated from (13))

- a. A: De muis heeft ergens van gegeten.
 The mouse has something of eaten.
 'The mouse ate at something.'
 B: * Wât heeft de muis gegeten?
 What has the mouse eaten
 'What (did the mouse eat)?'
- b. A: Het ijsje smolt ergens van.
 The ice-cream melted something from
 'The ice cream melted from something.'
 B: * Wât smolt het ijsje?
 What melted the ice-cream
 'I can't imagine what else (melted the ice cream).'

(49) Repeated from the b-example in (48)

A: [_α Het ijsje smolt ergens van] ‘the ice-cream melted from something’
 B: wat [_β smolt *t*₁ het ijsje]? ‘what melted the ice-cream?’

F-clo(α) = ∃x[melt(ice-cream, x)] ≈ something melted the ice-cream

F-clo(β) = ∃x[melt(ice-cream, x)] ≈ something melted the ice-cream

α ⇔ β, therefore ellipsis is licensed in β

❖ This problem can be overcome by supposing that, even in clausal ellipsis configurations, *e*-GIVENNESS is calculated over argument domains (i.e., VPs, small clauses, APs, even NPs?) even in clausal ellipsis configurations (*contra* Merchant 2001: §1.4):

(50) Repeated from the b-example in (48)

A: Het ijsje [_α smolt ergens van] ‘the ice-cream melted from something’
 B: * Wat [_β smolt *t*₁ het ijsje]? ‘what melted the ice-cream?’

F-clo(α) = ∃x∃y[melt(x, y)] ≈ something melted something

F-clo(β) = ∃x[melt(ice-cream, x)] ≈ something melted the ice-cream

α and β don’t mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

❖ The *e*-GIVENNESS approach also correctly predicts that ellipsis is unacceptable in causative-inchoative mismatch cases:

(51) a. A: Someone broke the vase. B: * The window did break *t*₁, too. (repeated from (16))
 b. A: The vase broke. B: * Whô broke the vase?
 B’: * Yeah, Lûcy broke the vase.

(52) Repeated from the b-example in (51):

A: The vase [_α broke *t*₁]. B: * Yeah, Lûcy [_β broke the vase].

F-clo(α) = ∃x[break(x)] ≈ something broke

F-clo(β) = ∃x∃y[melt(x, y)] ≈ someone broke something

α and β don’t mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

5.4.4 A grey area for the *e*-GIVENNESS approach: paraphrases and small antecedents

❖ It’s difficult to ascertain (for me, at least) whether the *e*-GIVENNESS approach can handle cases with ‘small’ antecedents.

❖ ∃-type shifting can raise the antecedent nominals to propositions, but a sophisticated event structure is required, too. Perhaps this requires so much pragmatic heavy-lifting that it renders the *e*-GIVENNESS approach rather toothless...

(53) A: Sally has [_{ANT} a new boyfriend]. (repeated from (5))
 B: Whô is {it / he / Sally’s new boyfriend}?

(54) The doctors anticipate [_{ANT} a full recovery] for me, but they really don’t know whên that recovery will be. (repeated from (6))

5.4.5 Disadvantages of the *e*-GIVENNESS approach

(62) Repeated from the *b.B'*-example in (61) (assuming retrospective *F*-marking on the correlate)

A: Ten [α contains five thrice_F]. B: * ten [β contains thrée fives].

$F\text{-clo}(\alpha) \approx \text{something contains a certain number of fives}$

$F\text{-clo}(\beta) \approx \text{something contains five a certain number of times}$

$\alpha \Leftrightarrow \beta$, therefore ellipsis is licensed in β

❖ Assuming that imperatives are properties (Portner 2005 et seq.), the *e*-GIVENness approach cannot straightforwardly account for the acceptability of mood-mismatches such as (8) (repeated in (63)):

(63) A: Always save a little from each paycheck.
B: Why should {I/one} should always save a little from each paycheck?

(64) Repeated from (63)

A: Always [α save a little]. B: Why should {I/one} [β save a little]?

$F\text{-clo}(\alpha) \approx \lambda x[\text{save}(\mathbf{a\ little}, x)] \approx \text{the property of saving a little}$

$F\text{-clo}(\beta) \approx \exists x[\text{save}(\mathbf{a\ little}, x)] \approx \text{someone saves a little}$

α and β don't mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

❖ At first glance, the *e*-GIVENness approach appears to make the correct predictions about the nonparallel extraction cases from §5.2.5:

(65) * I know that Abby [α thinks that the parrots sleep in a rubber tree], and I also know in [what type of tree]₁ Bën does [β think that the parrots sleep t_1]. (repeated from (28))

$F\text{-clo}(\alpha) = \exists x[x \text{ thinks that the parrots sleep in a rubber tree}]$

$\approx \text{someone thinks that parrots sleep a rubber tree}$

$F\text{-clo}(\beta) = \exists Y \exists x[x \text{ thinks that the parrots sleep in a } Y \text{ tree}]$

$\approx \text{someone thinks that parrots sleep in some kind of tree}$

α and β don't mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

❖ Problematically, the same application of *e*-GIVENness makes the incorrect prediction that similar but more structurally simple nonparallel extraction cases (namely, cases without *A'*-movement crossing a CP or DP boundary in the ellipsis site) are also unacceptable:

(66) Jôhn planted a rubber tree, but I'm unsure [what type of tree]₁ Mâry did [β plant t_1].

$F\text{-clo}(\alpha) = \exists x[\text{plant}(\mathbf{a\ rubber\ tree}, x)]$

$\approx \text{someone planted a rubber tree}$

$F\text{-clo}(\beta) = \exists Y \exists x[x \text{ planted a } Y \text{ tree}]$

$\approx \text{someone thinks that parrots sleep in some kind of tree}$

α and β don't mutually entail each other, therefore ellipsis is not licensed in β

❖ Notice that the reverse problem arises if one assumes that *rubber* in the antecedent clause of (65) and (66) is focus-marked. (I let the reader confirm this for herself.)

5.4.6 The *e*-GIVENness approach: summary

	Clausal ellipsis	Predicate ellipsis	<i>e</i> -GIVENness
Form of coreferential expressions	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns	✓

short / copular clausal paraphrases	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	??
Mood mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✓
Illocutionary force mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✗
Tense mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✓
Fixed argument effects	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed	✓
	Voice mismatch disallowed	Voice mismatch (partly) allowed	✗
P-omission with sprouted PPs	disallowed	sprouting is disallowed in general	✗
“Weir” mismatches	disallowed	<i>n / a</i>	✗
Nonparallel extraction	<i>n / a</i>	disallowed	✗

5.5. Syntactic identity conditions on ellipsis licensing

- ❖ The primary shortcoming Merchant’s *e*-GIVENNESS approach is that it doesn’t seem “syntactic” enough. This realization has motivated the recent development of purely syntactic identity conditions on ellipsis licensing (Rudin 2019, Anand, Hardt & McCloskey 2022; Andrés Saab’s work).
- ❖ Each syntactic approach is subtly different: we will explore Anand, Hardt & McCloskey 2022.
 - NB:** Anand et al.’s condition is intended only for sluicing.
 - NB:** Anand et al. don’t deny the importance of pragmatic reasoning in recovering the elliptic phrase. They view their identity condition as merely the **formal** condition on licensing sluicing.

5.5.1 Anand, Hardt & McCloskey’s (2022) syntactic isomorphism condition on sluicing

- (67) **Syntactic isomorphism condition for sluicing** (Anand, Hardt & McCloskey 2022: 9)
- a. The TP-complement of WH-C may be elided only if the lowest head in its extended projection projects or selects an argument domain XP which meets the condition in b.:
 - b. There is a phrase YP in the discourse context, such that for each pair of heads $\langle a, b \rangle$ in \mathcal{H} , the set of heads targeted for elision in XP, there is a pair of heads $\langle a', b' \rangle$ in YP such that:
 - (i) LEXICAL IDENTITY: a and a' are tokens of the same lexical item, b and b' are tokens of the same lexical item, and
 - (ii) STRUCTURAL IDENTITY: the path in XP between a and b is the same as the path in YP between a' and b' .

❖ For a simple case:

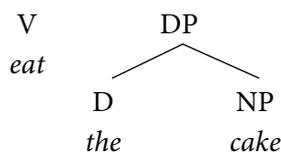
- (68) Someone will eat the cake, but I don’t know wh \hat{o}_1 will t_1 eat the cake.

- $XP = [_{VP} t_1 \text{ eat the cake}]$, $YP = [_{VP} t_1 \text{ eat the cake}]$
- Pairs of heads targeted for elision in XP = $\langle V_{\text{eat}}, D_{\text{the}} \rangle$, $\langle V_{\text{eat}}, N_{\text{cake}} \rangle$, $\langle D_{\text{the}}, N_{\text{cake}} \rangle$ ⁷
- Pairs of corresponding heads in YP = $\langle V_{\text{eat}}, D_{\text{the}} \rangle$, $\langle V_{\text{eat}}, N_{\text{cake}} \rangle$, $\langle D_{\text{the}}, N_{\text{cake}} \rangle$
- Is the lexical identity condition in (i) met? **Yes**
- Is the STRUCTURAL IDENTITY condition in (ii) met? **Yes**

both XP and YP =



⁷ Copies/traces of movement only count as “heads targeted for elision” every link the movement is targeted for deletion.



The syntactic isomorphism condition in (64) is satisfied, therefore ellipsis is licensed

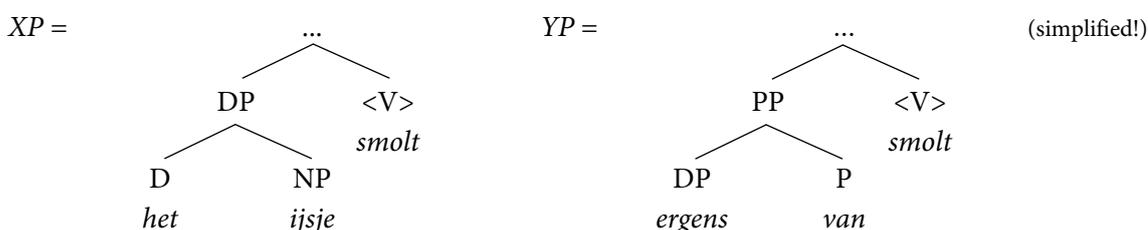
5.5.2 Advantages of the syntactic isomorphism condition on sluicing

- ❖ Anand, Hardt & McCloskey’s (henceforth, AHM) structural condition straightforwardly accounts for why illocutionary force, tense, and modality mismatches are permitted, as they mismatches occur above the argument domain and therefore are irrelevant to ellipsis licensing.
- ❖ Their condition also accounts for non-valency-changing fixed argument structure effects attested with sluicing:

(69) Repeated from the b-example in (48)

- A: [Het ijsje]₁ smolt₂ [_{YP} t₁ ergens van t₂] ‘the ice-cream melted from something’
 B: * Wat₁ smolt₂ [_{XP} t₁ het ijsje t₂]? ‘what melted the ice-cream?’

- Pairs of heads targeted for elision in XP = $\langle D_{het}, N_{ijsje} \rangle, \langle D_{het}, V_{smolt} \rangle, \langle N_{ijsje}, V_{smolt} \rangle$
- Pairs of corresponding heads in YP = $\langle D_{ergens}, P_{van} \rangle, \langle D_{ergens}, V_{smolt} \rangle, \langle P_{van}, V_{smolt} \rangle$
- Is the lexical identity condition in (i) met? **No**
- Is the STRUCTURAL IDENTITY condition in (ii) met? **No**

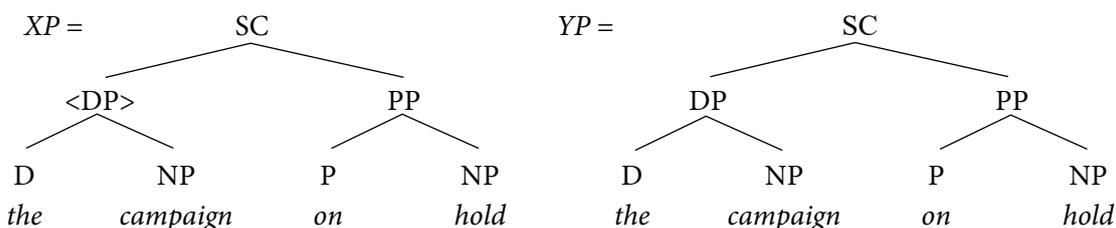


The syntactic isomorphism condition in (64) is **not** satisfied, therefore ellipsis is not licensed

- ❖ Their condition also accounts for the existence of nonisomorphic copular clausal elliptic clauses:

(70) With [_{YP} the campaign on hold] – and who knows for how long <the campaign> will be [_{XP} <the campaign> on hold]... (repeated from (6))

- Pairs of heads targeted for elision in XP = $\langle D_{the}, N_{campaign} \rangle, \langle D_{the}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle D_{the}, N_{hold} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, N_{hold} \rangle, \langle P_{on}, N_{hold} \rangle$
- Pairs of heads targeted for elision in YP = $\langle D_{the}, N_{campaign} \rangle, \langle D_{the}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle D_{the}, N_{hold} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, P_{on} \rangle, \langle N_{campaign}, N_{hold} \rangle, \langle P_{on}, N_{hold} \rangle$
- Is the lexical identity condition in (i) met? **Yes**
- Is the STRUCTURAL IDENTITY condition in (ii) met? **Yes**



The syntactic isomorphism condition in (64) is satisfied, therefore ellipsis is not licensed

- ❖ Unlike the *e*-GIVENness approach, AHM’s syntactic account also captures the valency-changing fixed argument structure effects observed in clausal ellipsis environments (see (55)), for the inability to P-strand under sprouting (see (59)), and for the Weir’s ‘co-intensional’ examples (see (61)).⁸
- ❖ Like the *e*-GIVENness approach, AHM’s syntactic account fails to capture the observation that clausal and predicate ellipsis differ regarding their tolerance of active-passive mismatches (see §5.2.2). But unlike the *e*-GIVENness approach, AHM’s analysis isn’t intended to cover predicate ellipsis. It was developed only for sluicing.
- ❖ Similarly, AHM’s analysis has nothing to say about “nonparallel extraction” cases such as (65), as these are restricted to VP ellipsis environments.
- ❖ Whether or not the condition in (67) can account for vehicle change depends on one’s prior assumptions about the syntactic structure of pronouns. To avoid entering into this debate, AHM (2022: 8, fn. 8) supplement their condition with the stipulation that “any two paired in an anaphoric linkage count as counterparts”.

5.3. Summary of syntactic identity conditions on ellipsis licensing

	Clausal ellipsis	Predicate ellipsis	<i>e</i> -GIVENness	AHM 2022
Form of coreferential expressions	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns	R-expressions can be replaced by pronouns	✓	✓
short / copular clausal paraphrases	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	??	✓
Mood mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✓	✓
Illocutionary force mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✗	✓
Tense mismatches	Permitted	<i>n / a</i>	✓	✓
Fixed argument effects	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed	Causative-inchoative mismatches disallowed	✓	✓
	Voice mismatch disallowed	Voice mismatch (partly) allowed	✗	<i>n / a</i>
P-omission with sprouted PPs	disallowed	sprouting is disallowed in general	✗	✓
“Weir” mismatches	disallowed	<i>n / a</i>	✗	✓
Nonparallel extraction	<i>n / a</i>	disallowed	✗	<i>n / a</i>

- ❖ Anand, Hardt & McCloskey’s (2022) syntactic identity condition seems more promising than Merchant’s (2001) *e*-GIVENness approach, which is semantic in nature.
- ❖ However, the comparison is slightly unfair on *e*-GIVENness, as AHM restrict themselves to sluicing and remain vague about how pragmatic reasoning prevents an “anything goes” situation in terms of mismatches above the argument domain.
 - AHM (p.18) say “properties of the elided clause expressed outside that domain are subject to no [syntactic] requirement and are free to diverge from those of the antecedent to the extent permitted by *pragmatic and semantic calculations*.” (my emphasis)
 - In other words, AHM are advocating a **hybrid** identity condition on sluicing; one which has a syntactic part (their isomorphism condition in (67)) and a pragmatic/semantic part (unspecified).

⁸ Rather than provide the working-out here, I let the reader confirm this for herself.

- ❖ Also, some of empirical generalizations that AHM build their account are questionable. For instance, Ranero (2021) argues that some specific types of feature mismatches above the argument domain are not permitted in clausal ellipsis contexts.

5.6 Pragmatic considerations for ellipsis identity (or: Multiple identity conditions?)

5.6.1 Exophoric licensing of clausal and predicate ellipsis

- ❖ Both clausal and predicate ellipsis can be licensed without an explicitly-uttered linguistic antecedent (i.e., ‘exophorically’): (cf. Ginzburg & Sag 2000, Miller & Pullum 2013, Weir 2014, a. o.)

- (71) a. [A child and her mother are looking at the rollercoaster]. Child: **Cân I, mum?**
 b. [Entering a construction site, Amy hands a helmet to Bob]. Bob: **Do I hâve to?**
 c. Vonnie’s first words to her [= Giselle] were “That fucking bastard. **How còuld he?**” Confused, Giselle turned to look behind her and then realized that Vonnie was referring to her eye. The shiner. . . [COCA]
- (72) a. [Anna and Bob are looking through a shop window at a child’s toy].
 Anna: **From Gêrmany**, I reckon. (adapted from Merchant 2004:716)
 b. [A child is holding a bowl of soup insecurely.] Mother: **Both hânds!**
 c. [Amy and Bob come down to breakfast to see Cath muttering to herself and pacing nervously. Puzzled, Bob looks to Amy for clarification.] Amy: **Interviêw.**
 d. [In an elevator] **What flôor?**
 e. [While collecting his conference nametag at the front desk, Steve asks an organizer:]
Which room?

- ❖ There is significant disagreement about exophoric ellipsis licensing in the literature:

- [1] Not ellipsis: fixed expressions, or involve null anaphora (*‘do it’*) (see Merchant 2004)
 [2] Genuine ellipsis, but licensed by a truly non-linguistic semantic object
 (see Ginzburg & Sag 2000, Weir 2014)
 [3] Genuine ellipsis, but licensed by an **accommodated** linguistically-derived antecedent
 (Fiengo & May 1994: 190–193, Chung et al. 1995, 2011, Ginzburg & Sag 2000: 331, Griffiths 2019a)

My opinion: Option-[1] is unlikely, as exophoric ellipsis seems productive, given a sufficiently ‘rich’ context. Based on the existence of structural (mis-)matches effects, only option-[3] offers the chance to develop a unified theory of ellipsis identity, one which includes both anaphoric and exophoric ellipsis.

5.6.2 Different sensitivities to questions and contrast

- ❖ Clausal ellipsis appears particularly sensitive to the discourse status of its antecedent.
- ❖ If the antecedent is a wh-question, a non-wh fragmentary response must answer that question. The same is not true for VP ellipsis:

- (73) A: Who did John say has the key to the liquor cabinet?
 B: Well, Mâry actually does **have the key**, but I don’t know what John said.
 B’: * Well, Mâry **has the key**, but I don’t know what John says.
- (74) A: Why did John go to the party?
 B: Well, Mâry did **go to the party**, and John does everything Mary does.
 B’: * Well, Mâry **went to the party**, and John does everything Mary does.

- (75) A: Which Brontë sister wrote *Emma*?
 B: Jane Austen did write *Emma*, you fool.
 B: * Jane Austen wrote *Emma*, you fool. ((73) to (75) come from Weir 2014)
- (76) A: Where did she go? B: I don't know. * But I think she went with Tim.
 A: What will she sing? B: * Well whatever it is, she'll sing it twice. (Griffiths, to appear)

❖ Dialogues such as (77) suggest that fragment answers must **immediately** answer their wh-question antecedents:

- (77) A: Did she watch *Goodfellas* last night?
 a. B: No, she watched *Casino*.
 b. B: Who put that crazy idea in your head? ?? She watched *Casino*. (Griffiths, to appear)

❖ Interestingly, the same effects are observed when the antecedent is an assertion containing an indefinite expression:

- (78) A: John says [that **some student** has the key to the liquor cabinet].
 B: Well, Prof. Smith actually does have the key, despite what John said.
 B': *Well, Prof. Smith has the key, despite what John says.
- (79) A: She is going to sing **something**. B: * Well whatever it is, she'll sing it twice, I bet.
- (80) A: She watched a **Scorsese film** last night.
 a. B: Yeah, she watched *Casino*.
 b. B: Yeah, I was with her. ? She watched *Casino*.

❖ Based on these observations (and others), many researchers have proposed that the clausal ellipsis can only be licensed from the **most salient question in the QUD** (henceforth *MaxQUD*).⁹

A brief aside on the QUD...

❖ The *Questions Under Discussion* (QUD) is a conversational resource for regulating coherence and defining relevance in discourse. It comprises a partly-ordered set of *questions* (Qs), where a Q is an information-state corresponding to a set of related propositions.

e.g., $Q_1 = \{\text{Mary invited Bob, Mary invited Pete, Mary invited Sue}\}$
 $= \{\text{Mary invited } u : u \in D\}$, where $D = \{\text{Bob, Pete, Sue}\}$

❖ The QUD functions like a pushdown store: when a new Q enters the QUD, it occupies the topmost position; when a Q is answered, it is popped off the stack.

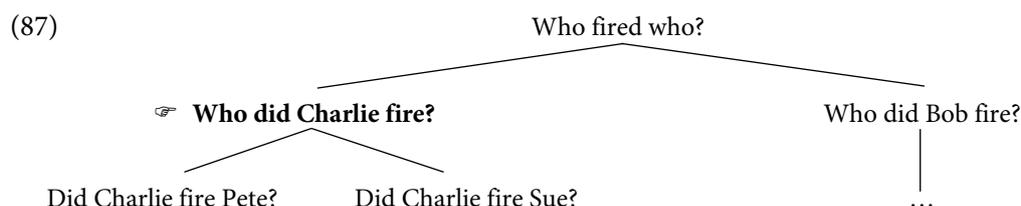
❖ There are a number of ways that Qs can enter the QUD:

- Via speakers uttering interrogative sentences

- (81) A: My new work colleagues seem nice enough.
 B: Who's your favourite so far?
 B's interrogative triggers addition of {A's fav is $u : u \in D$ } to QUD
 A: Jill, I reckon.

⁹ Ginzburg & Sag (2000), Ginzburg & Cooper (2004), Krifka (2006), Reich (2007), Weir (2014, 2017), Griffiths (2019a,b, to appear), among others.

- Via speakers uttering assertions containing indefinite expressions or disjunctions (the so-called *forward-looking* strategy; Ginzburg 2012):
- (82) A: My new work colleagues seem nice enough.
 B: I suspect you have **a favourite** already.
 B's interrogative triggers addition of {A's fav is $u : u \in D$ } to QUD
 A: Yeah, Jill.
- Via speakers uttering assertions containing a narrow, presentational focus (in particular discourse set-ups). In such cases, this requires the hearer to pragmatically accommodate a Q (the so-called *backwards-looking* strategy):
- (83) A: Guess what? Ken invited Lúcy to the barbeque.
 A's narrow-focus assertion triggers accommodation of the Q {Ken invited u to the barbeque $u : u \in D$ } to QUD, which A's assertion answers.
- In the case of (82), accommodation is triggered because assertions containing narrow, presentational foci are necessarily understood as addressing the MaxQUD. This is because this type of focus-marking is understood as being used solely to ensure that *Question-Answer Congruence* (see (83)) obtains between an assertion α and the Q in the QUD that α answers.
- (84) **Question-Answer (Q-A) congruence** (Weir 2014, following Krifka 2006, Reich 2007)
 An answer α is congruent to a question Q iff $\cup[\alpha]^f \leftrightarrow \cup Q$, where Q is in the QUD.
- (85) *A simple example:*
 A: Who did Sally give the keys to?
 B: She gave the keys to Pólly.
 B': # She gave the kês to Polly.
- (86) a. *The MaxQUD after A's utterance in (85):*
 $\cup[\text{Who did Sally give the keys to?}]^f = \lambda w \exists x[\text{Sally gave the keys to } x \text{ in } w]$
- b. *B's response in (85):*
- i. $\cup[\text{Sally gave the keys to Polly}]^f = \lambda w \exists x[\text{Sally gave the keys to } x \text{ in } w]$
 - ii. $\cup[(85B)]^f \leftrightarrow \cup(85A)$
 - iii. (85B) is a congruent answer to (85A)
- c. *B's response in (85):*
- i. $\cup[\text{Sally gave the keys}_F \text{ to Polly}]^f = \lambda w \exists x[\text{Sally gave } x \text{ to Polly in } w]$
 - ii. $\cup[(85B')]^f$ does not mutually entail $\cup(85A)$
 - iii. (85B') is an incongruent answer to (85A)
- ❖ Each Q in the QUD is situated within a hierarchy of superQs and subQs:



- ❖ Pragmatic relevance can be defined by reference to this hierarchy of Qs. A response is maximally relevant if it is Q/A-congruent with the MaxQUD, relevant-ish if it answers a Q closely-related to the MaxQUD in the hierarchy, and irrelevant if it doesn't address any Q in this hierarchy.
- ❖ Relevantish = utterances containing contrastive topics. These answer closely-related Qs to the actual MaxQUD:

- (88) A: Who did Charlie fire?
 B: Well, **Bob_{CT}** fired Frank.
 B answers a nearby Q, e.g. "Who did Bob fire?" or "Who did who fire?"

Back to ellipsis...

- ❖ The data in (73) to (80) suggest that:
 - Clausal ellipsis is licensed by the Q introduced by the explicitly-utterance antecedent clause
 - An elliptic clause must answer (fragment answers) or repeat (sluicing) the MaxQUD while the Q is maximally salient (i.e., invoked from the latest discourse MOVE).
- ❖ By contrast, it appears that a clause containing VP ellipsis must enter into a *contrastive* discourse relation with its antecedent for ellipsis to be licensed (see (89) to (91)).¹⁰ The same is not true for clausal ellipsis (92).

(89) *Tautological utterances*

- a. John_j should kiss every girl he_j should kiss.
(an evasive answer to *how many girls should John kiss?*)
- b. John_j likes as many girls as he_j likes.
(an evasive answer to *how many girls does John like?*)
- c. John_j eats what he_j eats.
(an evasive answer to *what does John eat?*)
- d. If John_j's wrong, then he_j's wrong.
(an evasive answer to *what if John's wrong?*)

(90) (Schuyler 2001, Stockwell 2018, Griffiths 2019b)

- a. * John_j should kiss every girl he_j should **kiss**.
- b. * John_j likes as many girls as he_j does **like**.
- c. * John_j eats what he_j does **eat**.
- d. * If John_j is wrong, then he_j is **wrong**.

(91) *Iterated events* (Stockwell 2018:598)

- a. They talked and they talked and they talked.
- b. They talked and talked and talked.
- a'. * They talked and they did **talk** and they did **talk**.
- b'. * They talked and did **talk** and did **talk**.

- (92) A: What does Sally like to drink? B: **Sally likes to drink** coffee.

- ❖ *Summary*: it appears that clausal ellipsis is more sensitive to the discourse status of its antecedent than VP ellipsis is. However, VP ellipsis seems to be sensitive to relation that obtains between the elliptic clause and its antecedent (namely, they must be in a *contrastive relation*).

- ❖ Questions for future research:

¹⁰ For concreteness, I assume the following definition of *contrastivity*:

Contrast (based on Krifka 2008: 252): A phrase β *contrasts* with a phrase α only iff: (i) α is in the immediately surrounding context, (ii) $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{\circ} \in \llbracket \beta \rrbracket'$ for all assignments g , and (iii) $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{\circ} \neq \llbracket \beta \rrbracket^{\circ}$

- Can the observation that ellipsis is sensitive to the structural composition of its antecedent be reconciled with the idea that clausal ellipsis is licensed by the *MaxQUD* (a non-linguistic entity)?
- Is a universal identity condition on ellipsis still salvageable, or must we consign ourselves to the idea that different forms of ellipsis have different identity conditions?

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